



Town of Moraga

PUBLIC WORKS/ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT

Street Light Request Information

Frequently asked questions and answers:

Q1: Why do some residential streets in Moraga have street lights and others not have street lights?

A1: Older residential subdivisions in Town were not required to install street lights.

Prior to incorporation of the Town in 1974, residential development was administered by the County. The County's Ordinance Specifications in the 1950s and early 1960s did not require street lighting as a condition of development. Beginning in the mid-1960s street lights were required and were typically installed on the overhead power poles that served the development. After the Town incorporated in the 1970s subdivisions were required to install underground utilities and street lights were installed on separate poles or "luminaires".

Q2: How are street lights paid for in Moraga?

A2: With special charges termed "Assessments."

In 1979, following the passage of Proposition 13 (Article XIII A of the state constitution) the Town formed "Assessment District 1979-1, Town of Moraga Street Lighting" pursuant to the provisions of the state law. The assessment district enables the Town to collect assessments or charges for servicing and maintaining street lights. Assessments are levied and collected annually according to special benefits received by properties from street lighting. A public hearing on the amount of the assessments is conducted each year. Only properties that are in subdivisions that were required to install street lights, or those that were annexed to the District since formation in 1979 are assessed. The assessments for single family residential detached homes have remained the same, \$58 per year, since 2010. Assessments are collected annually on property tax bills along with property taxes.

Q3: Can the Town install a street light on my street or in front of my house?

A3: It depends.

Is your property currently a part of the Moraga Street Lighting Assessment District (AD 1979-1)? You may already know this if you notice a line item on your yearly tax bill for street lights. This means that your property is already assessed a small amount each year for your proportionate share to maintain the existing street lights on your street and the arterial streets in town. (If your property is already in the Street Lighting District, then skip down to question Q5 below.)

If not, then you may want to annex your property into the Moraga Street Lighting Assessment District. The Town's Public Works Department can help you determine this information about your property. (See Q4 on how to annex into the Street Lighting District.)

Or you can contact PG&E directly to see if they can install a private street light in front of your house. This light would require that an existing power pole front your property. The light would be positioned to shine towards your house rather than over the street. This private street light would be billed directly to you. Annexation to the Street Lighting District would not be required.

Q4: What is the process to annex into the Moraga Street Lighting Assessment District (AD 1979-1)?

A4: If you choose to annex your property to the Town's Street Lighting Assessment District, then you will need to obtain approval from your neighbors who will be affected by the new street light. The property owners on either side of your residence and the three properties directly across the street (or a total of 6 residences, including your property) must agree to formally annex their property to the Street Lighting Assessment District.

Annexation into the District involves the preparation of an Engineer's Report (which will be prepared by the Town's Street Lighting District Engineer), the mailing of notices to the 6 property owners, and adoption of 4 Resolutions by the Town Council, in a process that occurs over a 3-month period.

Once the territory (the 6 properties) has been annexed, the Town sends a letter to PG&E requesting the new street light to be installed. PG&E will then begin the engineering and design work, which typically takes 3 to 6 months, for the light installation.

Q5: What are the costs involved with getting a new street light installed?

A5: It depends on the type of service (overhead or underground) and the number of properties that propose to annex.

The minimum cost to conduct annexation proceedings (see process in answer A4 above), which cover the cost of the Town's Street Lighting Assessment District Engineer, is \$1,800 (or about \$300 per property for six properties). The total cost would be more in total and less per property for larger annexations. The Town would require a deposit from a property owner in order to commence annexation proceedings. Currently, the annual assessment for a single family detached residence is \$58 per year. (This is the amount you will see on your tax bill).

If you currently have overhead electrical lines and wooden poles in front of your house, then there is a nominal cost to install a new LED street light. This would be an additional cost and assessed in the first year.

If the existing system on your street is underground, the cost to install a new street light including the trenching and installation of a pole/luminaire could be as much as \$20,000. The project would likely require engineering beyond what PG&E normally furnishes, i.e. plans and specifications and bid documents for the trenching, substructure and pole installation.

Q6: I'm already paying for street lights and my property is already in the Street Lighting District. Can I get a new street light installed in front of my house?

A6: Possibly.

Existing street lights are generally spaced according to illumination engineering standards adopted by the Town. Typically lighting on residential streets consists of a 70

watt bulb spaced approximately at 500 foot intervals. This spacing coincides with the spacing of the power poles in developments with overhead utilities. There are two scenarios where an additional light might be installed:

- (1) If the Town Engineer and the Assessment District Engineer determine that an additional light is required to meet minimum lighting standards, an additional light may be installed. The added cost of the light would be absorbed by the assessment district. This assumes that the light may be installed on an existing power pole. The decision as to whether the lighting is less than standard is reserved solely to the Town Engineer and the Assessment District Engineer. Lighting that is diminished due to trees is generally not a cause for the installation of an additional light.
- (2) If a group of neighbors desire a level of lighting on their street that exceeds the minimum standard (i.e. 70 watt bulbs at 500 foot spacing) they may petition the town to increase the level of lighting. If a unanimous petition is received, the Town may consider adding additional lights, provided that the neighbors agree, through a special report, hearing and ballot process to pay for the increased cost of the lighting including the incidental costs of the assessment proceedings.

If you would like to proceed with your request to install a new street light, please contact the Moraga Public Works Department at (925) 888-7026 or publicworks@moraga.ca.us.

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